

CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING

RECORD OF DECISIONS taken by the Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Steve Wemyss, at his meeting held on Tuesday, 27 January 2015 at 5.30 pm at the Executive Meeting Room - The Guildhall

Present

Councillor Steve Wemyss (Cabinet Member)

Councillor Stuart Potter (Spokesperson)

Also Present

Councillor Darren Sanders

Maria Cole and Adrian Blackwood, Residents' Representatives

1. Apologies for Absence (AI 1)

Councillor David Fuller had sent his apologies for absence.

2. Declaration of Interests (AI 2)

Councillor Sanders was present and declared that his mother lives in council accommodation and her block would be affected by the charges, but this was a non-pecuniary interest.

3. Council Housing Budget 2015/16 (rents and charges) (AI 3)

Nick Haverly, Finance Manager, presented the report on behalf of the Head of Housing and Property Services and the Head of Finance and S151 Officer, and wished to place on record the work of all the officers and residents involved in the process of compiling the report. The recommended rise in rent was at a level of 2.2%. As part of the review of service charges it had previously been agreed that there should be a move towards full cost recovery over a three year period, so the proposed increases reflected this. There would be a freeze on heating charges and sheltered housing scheme charges. It was proposed that laundry charges be increased to achieve recovery of costs and the report set out a freeze on washing charges but an increase in drying charges to recover full cost.

After asking for comments, Councillor Wemyss as Cabinet Member for Housing, also wished to record his appreciation to all the staff for all their hard work on the report and the valued contributions of the tenants and leaseholders. He had received many representations on the subject of the laundry charges. Councillor Wemyss was pleased that the rent rise of 2.2%

was at a lower level than previous increases. With regard to the laundry drying charges he would wish to stagger the increase by approximately 50p per year until it reaches the requisite level to recover cost (but not make a profit), in recognition of the representations.

Questions were asked by Councillor Potter and Councillor Sanders regarding the length and method of recovery of cost on drying charges and its relationship to energy prices which may require its review. Nick Haverly confirmed that it was anticipated that cost recovery could be achieved over the next three years.

DECISION: The Cabinet Member for Housing approved:

- (i) All rents and charges to be effective from 1st April 2015 or such other date as determined by the Head of Housing and Property Services (HHPS) in consultation with the Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer (HFS).**
- (ii) Dwelling rents for 2015/16 to be set as in accordance with Central Government's Social Rent Policy (equating Sept CPI plus 1% = 2.2%)**
- (iii) General Service charges for 2015/16 to be set at this meeting as set out in this report, with a view to meet full cost recovery over a three period, as set out in Appendix 6.**
- (iv) Sheltered Housing Service charges for next year to be set at this meeting as set out in this report, and in accordance with Appendix 7.**
- (v) Laundry charges for next year to be set at this meeting as set out in this report, and in accordance with Appendix 8, except for drying charges which would increase at a rate of approximately 50p per year over the next 3 years (to move towards cost recovery).**
- (vi) Heating charges to be set in accordance with Appendix 9.**
- (vii) Mobile home license fees as shown on Appendix 10 are approved.**
- (viii) Garages and parking site rents as shown on Appendix 10 be approved and authority to let garages at reduced rents where demand is low be delegated to Head of Housing & Property Services in consultation with the Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer.**
- (ix) Revenue budgets for 2014/15 and 2015/16 as set out in Appendix 4 be approved and authority given to the HHPS in consultation with the HFS to amend the budgets to reflect the latest available information prior to finalising budgets for 2015/16.**
- (x) The relevant Managers be authorised to incur expenditure in 2015/16.**

(xi) The forecast Revenue Budgets for 2016/17 to 2018/19 as set out in Appendix 4 and arising from the proposals contained in this report be noted.

4. Change of date of next Cabinet Member for Housing's decision meeting in March (AI 4)

DECISION: The Cabinet Member for Housing's next decision meeting be rescheduled from 10 March to the new date of Monday 16 March 2015 at 5.30pm.

The meeting concluded at 5.45 pm.

Councillor Steve Wemyss
Cabinet Member for Housing